



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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May 13, 1982

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SUBJECT: Chemical Weapons Use Team Trip Report

SUMMARY

Formal briefings and discussions were held in the following locations: London, NATO, SHAPE, Islamabad, Peshawar, Karachi, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Beijing, Tokyo, Sydney, Canberra, Wellington, CINCPAC HQ, and Ottawa. The Team departed Washington on March 25 and returned on April 28.

Briefings were given to six different audiences in most countries: US embassies and consulates, ministries of foreign affairs and defense, intelligence agencies, the press and the local diplomatic corps. Briefings to the local diplomatic corps, usually at a social affair, provided a unique opportunity to contact officials from countries that were not on the itinerary. Extensive media coverage resulted from press conferences and interviews arranged by Mr. Kiehl through ICA officers at each post.

All governments visited by the CW Briefing Team acknowledged that they were convinced that lethal chemical warfare is being

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waged in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan, but wished to make their position known publicly on this matter in their own way. Much of the skepticism or apprehension and confusion encountered by the Team in each country in its initial contacts with US embassies, governments and the press was overcome as the discussions progressed. While some differences remain on the exact identity of the chemical agents being used, all governments expressed their intention to continue their own investigation with a view to providing their evidence to the UN Experts Group. Follow-up actions developed by the Team at the technical level will significantly aid these investigations.

Given the varying levels of misunderstanding encountered on this trip, even in countries fairly familiar with the issue, we recommend additional briefings of other countries to explain the evidence and the US position.

Initial misperceptions encountered included:

--The suspicion on the part of host governments and US embassies that the CW Briefing Team was yet another chapter in the US Administration's effort to score propaganda points against the Soviets. This notion was dispelled by a display of personal commitment and technical expertise of the Team members, many of whom had pursued this issue for many years. The briefing style--testimony by each member of the Team rather than a mechanistic vu-graph presentation--tended to convey a non-polemical, serious concern of the US government over a humanitarian issue. The Team's stated purpose was to generate enough international pressure against CW use to get it stopped.

--The general lack of knowledge about chemical warfare, even in our own embassies. Most people tend to lump CW and BW together, not understanding the fine distinctions among biological, chemical and toxin substances, or between deadly nerve gas and non-lethal herbicides, like Agent Orange. Much effort went into driving home the all-important distinctions.

--The suspicion that the Team's real purpose was to "justify" the US binary CW modernization program. The Team sought to clarify this issue by carefully defining terms and emphasizing the phased linkage between US defense and arms control objectives in the CW sphere.

--Apprehensions by both embassies and governments about the Team's desire to conduct a press conference. There was a common fear that the Team would embarrass the host government by commenting on that government's degree of support of the US position. The Team assiduously avoided such statements, stressing both privately and publicly that each government should conduct its own investigation and convey its findings

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to the UN. In all cases the governments were delighted with the outcome of media contacts. (END SUMMARY)

London: The major stumbling block in the UK is a political sensitivity to raising the issue of chemical warfare with the British public. Elements of the British public see a strong link between the CW use issue and the possible deployment of US chemical weapons in the UK. The intelligence services agree with the US analysis, although they would like to confirm independently the presence of toxins in a sample. Unfortunately, the first sample they analyzed contained harmless yellow material, which the British speculate was dropped as part of a Soviet disinformation campaign to discredit the US evidence.

Recommendation: More than any other country, the UK should be encouraged to speed up its investigation and make its findings available to the UN. New evidence and analysis should be shared on a much more timely basis with the UK; technical consultations should be increased. However, the major problem at present is not at the technical, but the political level.

NATO: Briefings at NATO raised the level of concern and will undoubtedly lead to requests for briefings in capitals. A request for a detailed briefing in Bonn came from a senior intelligence officer. France has collected a significant amount of evidence and has medical teams operating in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan. France could be very useful in the collection effort, and at some point might make its evidence available to the UN. Some gentle political prodding may be required as there appears to be considerable political sensitivity in France to supporting the US on any CW issue.

Recommendation: Bilateral contacts with the European intelligence services should be increased to acquaint them with the sensitive evidence to the extent possible. Consideration should be given to briefing the western and non-aligned groups at the Committee on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva.

European governments have been appraised of the US evidence and some are well launched on their own investigations. At this stage, further briefing efforts should be directed toward energizing non-NATO allies and non-aligned countries.

SHAPE: The Nuclear Planners Conference was holding meetings at SHAPE which allowed the Team to provide a full briefing to planners who must take into consideration the new dimensions of the chemical warfare threat. No US intelligence assesement regarding the implications of this CW use issue to a European war has been developed that would allow the US Team to reflect a US position.

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Pakistan: The Team went to Pakistan with the objective of finding ways to improve the collection effort and to encourage the Pakistanis to cooperate more effectively. Discussions with Ambassador Spiers and other key members of the US Mission as well as the Pakistani military, intelligence and foreign affairs officers led to the firm conclusion that a well-coordinated effort to collect evidence is underway. However, a problem remains on how to conduct systematic interviews in the unstructured environment of the refugee camps. Both US and Pakistani officers are aware of the problem and are looking for ways of overcoming the severe constraints. Discussions with the US Consul in Peshawar for example revealed serious limitations stemming from the lack of access to critical areas and the dearth of a friendly foreign presence--the only other consulates in Peshawar are those of Iran and Afghanistan.

The Team took every opportunity to encourage other governments representatives in Pakistan to collect information. Meetings with foreign diplomats took place in Islamabad and Karachi. US officers in Karachi appear to have excellent access to refugees and tribal leaders in Baluchistan, and expressed a willingness to increase their efforts to seek out and interview CW victims.

The Pakistani government, sensitive about its non-aligned status, wants to continue working through the UN and is willing to invite the UN Experts Group back. Pakistani officials were not impressed with the UN investigation, and if it produces an inconclusive report, MFA spokesmen indicated that the government might be willing publicly to state its' conviction that lethal agents are being used in Afghanistan.

Recommendation: US efforts to improve collection and cooperation with the Pakistanis should be channeled through Ambassador Spiers. The US country team knows what must be done and can best recommend actions to improve collection and influence the governments' policy.

Thailand: Every officer contacted, civilian and military, is convinced that lethal chemical agents are being used in Laos and Kampuchea. The Thai have collected a significant amount of evidence and are actively engaged in a sample analysis program. The government has not made an official statement, although it is prepared to invite the UN investigation team back. Shortly after the Team's briefing to the Thai Supreme Command, General Saiyud Kerdpol, Supreme Commander of the armed forces, made a public statement strongly supporting the US evidence. Through the dedicated efforts of two officers, Ed McWilliams (Political Officer) and LTC Denny Lane (Assistant Army Attache) the US collection program has been vigorously sustained and cooperation with other country officers has been fostered. Samples are being shared with the UK and Australia and arrangements can be made to

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provide samples to the UN or other countries. McWilliams and Lane have been concentrating for many months on sample collection, leaving little time for systematic interviews. They have been significantly aided by the volunteer efforts of an American physician, Dr. Amos Townsend.

During a one day visit to Ban Vinai, the Hmong camp on the Laotian border, the Team discovered that seventy new refugees had entered the camp, many with stories of gas attacks, but the World Vision Health Unit did not have enough people to conduct systematic interviews. The physicians and nurses there had previously interviewed earlier gas victims and appeared convinced that the gas attacks were continuing. Many of the camp files on CW victims, however, have been stolen. [ ] gave a complete briefing on signs and symptoms to the local staff. World Vision had designed a questionnaire of their own for use with gas victims. Two boys and two men in the camp were examined by Dr. Green and found to be suffering from apparent toxin poisoning. The Team transported one of the men who was still-symptomatic from an attack back to a hospital in Bangkok in the DAO's aircraft.

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Team members also visited a number of refugee camps and hospitals on the Kampuchean border, met with resistance leaders, and briefed medical personnel. The collection environment on that border is complicated by political rivalries among the various resistance groups and the high level of security displayed by the Thai military in what they consider their most sensitive war zone. It is only through the personal liaison maintained by McWilliams and Lane with the Thai and the resistance leaders that an effective collection program is sustained. We also face a growing problem--resulting from the extensive publicity--of false information and spurious samples being offered in exchange for money and favors. For example, the Australians may well have been caught in a bogus "chemical weapon deal" when one of their newscasters spent \$10,000 in mounting an operation to obtain a "CW rocket". CW Team members were offered a sample for \$250,000 which was eventually provided free and turned out to be medicine.

The chairman of the Thai National Security Council, Prasong Semsiri, stressed Thailand's regional security concerns. He advanced the interesting suggestion that a CW conference be organized with the ASEAN countries to examine the security problem being posed not only by CW use, but by the increasing chemical warfare capability of the Vietnamese.

LTC Celec had a productive luncheon with the PRC military attache to Thailand who was interested primarily in questions of battlefield personal and collective CW protection.

The press conference in Bangkok was the most lively and best attended of the Team's media encounters throughout the trip. The Bangkok English language press gave wide and supportive coverage

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to the Team's presentation, as did regional and international Bangkok based media.

Recommendation: While it may be advisable to have a few more US officers conducting interviews in the refugee camp, it would be more useful if other nations could be encouraged to send officers and physicians to conduct interviews and medical exams.

Prasong's suggestion for a regional ASEAN CW conference should be seriously considered. We intend to prepare a proposal on how such a conference could be organized and the groundwork laid at the upcoming ASEAN conference.

Hong Kong: Con Gen Burt Levin reviewed the report with considerable interest. Mr. Levin had been skeptical of the charges of chemical warfare in Southeast Asia since his days as DCM in Bangkok. But he admitted that he was now impressed with the amount and detail of the evidence presented and would continue to follow this issue as it developed. The principal objective of exposing the influential Asian press in Hong Kong to the US findings was successfully accomplished. As in Bangkok, media in Hong Kong were sympathetic and well informed.

PRC: The willingness of the Chinese to receive the Team, and the cordial reception accorded its members, was viewed by the Embassy as a welcome indication that, despite current tensions over Taiwan, the PRC was prepared to continue normal contacts with the US in areas where they have a great deal to gain.

Chinese officers, civilian and military, were very familiar with the CW issue and had obviously carefully studied Secretary Haig's report to Congress. The sessions were all very cordial and many probing questions were asked. Officers, especially at the technical level, were characteristically reticent in sharing their information and evidence. An exception was Shi Ji Cheng, Chief, Disarmament Division, Department of International Organization, MFA, who was surprisingly frank in a conversation with Mr. Crocker. He described how the Vietnamese had used a chemical mine or booby trap against Chinese forces during the conflict in 1979. He was struck by the similarity to the description of a gas booby trap the Vietnamese used against the DK which he had read about in the US report. The Chinese also have discovered snake venom on flechettes used against them by the Vietnamese. Shi alluded to a Chinese collection effort in Kampuchea and intimated that samples had been collected, but did not offer any analytical results except to say that their results were not inconsistent with ours. Crocker took the opportunity to pass on a rumor from Thailand that the Chinese were providing chemical weapons to the DK, implying that, if that rumor were true, it would undermine the charges against the Vietnamese. Shi appeared to appreciate the implications.

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PRC officials proudly pointed to public statements they have made regarding the use of CW, but admitted that their statements, like those of the US, tend to be discounted as anti-Soviet propaganda. Therefore, they completely agreed with the US effort to encourage neutral countries to make their own investigation and present their evidence to the UN.

Stettner and Crocker had a lengthy discussion during a luncheon in Islamabad, with Tien Ting, PRC Counselor in Pakistan, and were impressed with his evident familiarity with the CW issue. A comment by Shi, who is an old friend of Tien, implied that Tien had sent a favorable report to Beijing on the CW Briefing Team effort in Pakistan.

Recommendation: Members of the Team--[ ] Watson and Stettner--who met with the scientific and technical personnel, at the PRC Military Medical Academy, believe that follow-up exchanges of information and analytical techniques would be helpful to the Chinese and in time might elicit better cooperation. Since the Chinese obviously have an active collection program, but lack the most sophisticated technologies to quantify or even qualitatively identify different tricothecene toxins, US technical assistance might have some useful payoff.

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Japan: Japanese MFA officials were initially concerned that the Team's visit was for the purpose of pressuring Japan to support publicly the US position. The MFA spokesman in his opening remarks stressed the importance the Japanese attach to working the issue through the UN independently of the US. At the conclusion of the MFA briefing, Crocker was told that Dr. Ueno, world-renowned Japanese expert on mycotoxin identification, had been contacted by the government and was prepared to accept samples for analysis. The Japanese reiterated that they would accept samples only from the UN which had a verifiable chain of custody. If Dr. Ueno should reach a positive result on sample analysis, there should be no hint of US involvement.

A separate briefing was given to the Cabinet Research Office staff who were much better informed and more interested in discussing the technical evidence than the MFA officers whose main concern was arms control. Both expressed considerable interest in US future plans and strategies for raising international concern.

Recommendation: Keep the MFA, JDA and Cabinet Research Office informed of new evidence. The prerequisite established by the Japanese government for accepting samples will be difficult to meet; therefore, careful thought should be given to identifying means to facilitate sample transfer that will satisfy Japanese concerns.

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Australia: Team members had been forewarned in Washington by an Australian intelligence officer that the Joint Intelligence Office (JIO) had finished an estimate which concludes that only the riot control agent Adamsite had been used in Southeast Asia. Publication of the report had been blocked because of high level political interest in a more thorough investigation, including greater cooperation with US intelligence.

At his initiative, Dr. Morris Barton, S&T Intelligence, JIO, treated Crocker, [redacted] and Watson to a formal briefing the evening the Team arrived in Canberra. It was obvious that the starting assumption of the JIO report was that the US was wrong about toxin use and some members of the JIO staff were determined to prove it. [redacted] Dr. Watson politely refuted point after point displayed on the vu-graphs, explaining in some instances that the US data had been misinterpreted or new information was available. Dr. Barton accepted the critique with interest, and did not argue the JIO case. It appeared that he was preparing the Team for the encounters with MFA and JIO the next day.

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John Kelso, MFA, made a presentation at the beginning of the session with MFA, MOD and JIO officers which indicated strong Australian support for the US effort. MFA officers were prepared to accept the US evidence and willing to speed up the Australian investigation with the aim of presenting independent evidence to the UN. They were also interested in suggestions on how to make the UN investigation more responsive, completely agreeing with the US analysis of the inherent weaknesses of the UN Experts Group. Although initially apprehensive about the Team conducting a press conference, the MFA evidently had a change of heart. Toward the end of a three hour session with MFA, MOD and JIO officers, Crocker was informed that a press conference had been arranged outside the MFA building at the conclusion of the meeting. MFA officials personally expressed their appreciation for the way the press was handled, especially the national TV networks.

Serious opposition to the US evidence surfaced in the subsequent briefing at the Joint Intelligence Office. Many probing and critical questions were raised by Dr. Shirley Freeman of the Melbourne Research Lab, who has also participated in the CW Working Group of the CD in Geneva. Team members felt they answered all her questions and satisfied many of her concerns.

It was apparent to the Team members that the analytical problem can be traced to a few analysts and Dr. Freeman. Although all of their questions were answered fully, they never conceded that their analysis might be lacking. The disappointment with JIO was somewhat compensated for by a last minute call to Gary Crocker by John Kelso of Foreign Affairs who indicated a recognition of the problem in JIO. Kelso said that new analysts at a higher

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level were being put on the issue with the objective of speeding up the drafting of a revised estimate. He stated that the Team's presentation, including the request for Australia to present evidence to the UN, had made a significant impression on FA officers.

There was considerable public attention in Australia on the acquisition of a "CW rocket" by an Australian TV newscaster. Team members met with the newscaster at a cocktail buffet for the press. He described how he had worked for one year with the Hmong resistance to steal the "CW weapon" from a warehouse and revealed that the operation had cost \$10,000. Subsequent evaluation by Australian attaches in Thailand revealed it was an old conventional rocket grenade. At the time of the Team's visit to Canberra, however, there were high expectations among the press corps that Australia might have discovered the "smoking gun".

Recommendation: If Australia could independently collect evidence and prepare a convincing case, there is little doubt that it would make its evidence available to the UN. Therefore, close coordination should be maintained with JIO, Defense, MFA and the Cabinet Assessment Staff. Every effort should be made to insure that the Australians can properly analyze samples, either in Australia or elsewhere. An Australian technical expert is now visiting the US and is being fully briefed.

New Zealand: As expected, the Team found a host of believers in Wellington fully prepared to support the US effort in the UN. The Team expressed formal thanks to New Zealand for its continuing efforts to keep the issue alive in that forum. An elaborate briefing program was scheduled, which included a working dinner with parliamentarians attended by Crocker and Heymann. Celec and Macdonald met with the Secretary of Defense. Selected diplomats from Pacific, ASEAN and European countries were also briefed. Press briefings resulted in extensive media coverage, including national television.

Foreign Affairs officers, in particular those working in UN affairs, were most anxious to work with the US on a UN strategy. They thought it might be useful to try to change the composition of the UN Experts Group to increase the range of expertise of the members and make it a more effective investigating body.

Recommendation: The New Zealand government greatly appreciated being included in the Team's itinerary. It should be kept fully informed on US policy on the CW issue and be provided any new evidence on a timely basis. Thus far, New Zealand would appear to be the best political ally on the issue.

CINCPAC: The Team took the opportunity to brief CINCPAC to insure that the evidence and the US position were understood. Any divergence of view, however slight, that emerges from CINCPAC would be seized on by opponents and skeptics. Judging from the

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numerous questions from the Deputy Commander (who took the briefing in CINCPAC's absence) and his staff, they gained a better understanding of the issue.

Canada: Leaving Ottawa until the end of the trip allowed the Team to give the Canadians the full benefit of the Team's experience and perceptions. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] they were well briefed on the US evidence. They had sent Dr. Rudolf Schieffer, a veterinary pathologist, to Thailand to undertake a comprehensive investigation of natural disease and the presence of naturally occurring toxins. Schieffer provided the Team with a meticulous, highly informative briefing. He had systematically explored all alternate hypotheses that he could conceive of that could explain the deaths in Laos and Kampuchea. By the process of elimination, he concluded that the use of tricothecenes, disseminated as CW agents, could explain the deaths. He also conducted a survey of naturally occurring fungi in areas where no attacks were known to have occurred. His final report may be submitted to the UN experts group by the Canadian government.

Canadian physicians briefed Team members on their recent six week survey of refugee camps in Thailand. They concluded that lethal chemical agents are being used. Further, they assisted US Embassy personnel in obtaining blood samples from victims of an attack in Kampuchea and conducted an autopsy on one victim. These results have been shared with US personnel and the autopsy samples have been split for analysis in both countries. NOTE: Analysis of blood and urine from four living victims revealed the presence of a tricothecene toxin and its metabolite.

Like New Zealand, the Canadians have consistently supported the US and are willing to present evidence to the UN. New information should be shared on a timely basis and not delayed by red tape as has happened in the past. A suggestion was made by the Canadians for a better institutional framework to share intelligence on this issue.

Recommendation: Establish an Ad Hoc Working Group of analysts from the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand with procedures set up to quickly share information among the countries. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] It would be advisable at some point to have an intelligence conference to discuss the evidence and present briefings. Current procedures and arrangements are not working.

In general, the Team believes that DAO officers in each country visited should be tasked to play a more direct and involved role--in collaboration with embassy political sections and other relevant US elements--to engage host governments' attention on CW issues. Specifically in Pakistan and Thailand--

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where sample collection is a crucial task--the Team recommends that the DAO staff and/or requirements be augmented to facilitate sample collection, as well as to give more attention to the importance of systematic interviewing. The mechanism to align source resources of various agencies of the country team should be determined in-country.

Conclusion: All governments visited recognize that the US has the undisputed lead on the CW use issue, and expect the US to provide new evidence and analysis. Secretary Haig's report to Congress was thorough and well-received, and no country can hope to duplicate that depth of analysis. The arms control elements of the governments will look to the US for the lead in dealing with the issue in the UN and the CD. Similarly, the defense establishments expect the US to develop defensive measures that may be effective against toxins and other possible new Soviet agents. In a number of countries, especially Pakistan, Thailand, and the PRC, the security concern is more pressing than the desire to prove that the Soviets have violated an international agreement. There is a degree of competition with the US, particularly evident in the intelligence services and the press, to discover more conclusive evidence. That competition should be encouraged; it becomes more apparent that "convincing evidence" to many people means non-US Government evidence. However, the Team was gratified to discover that in all countries visited the credibility of the US on this issue is rapidly improving. The governments visited share our low expectations that the UN Experts Group (as constituted) will submit a strong final report for the following reasons:

--The UN Group does not have the range of expertise nor the access to the areas of conflict to conduct a credible investigation.

--UN groups have historically been reluctant to levy vigorous charges against the Soviet Union.

--UN management of the Experts Group and the passivity of the investigation makes unlikely a report that will pinpoint ultimate responsibility.

If an ambivalent, inconclusive UN report emerges, this is almost certain to trigger public questions in the media and parliaments on the reaction of individual governments to the validity of the US charges. Those governments formally appraised of the US findings will be obliged to make their positions known publicly.

We should make good use of the time before a UN report is released to insure that as many governments as possible are fully briefed, and selected governments are encouraged to state their positions as early as possible.

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Finally, the Team feels strongly that based on technical data, the SNIE recently published, and impressions gained during the trip....that we need now to focus on the questions relating to the implications of CW use. The essential issue of proof is now established to the extent it can be, although new results will undoubtedly continue to strengthen the evidential base. Confirmatory results should not be presented as an apology of the Secretary's report. The US government does not need to reprove what it has already stated as a firm US Government conclusion. New evidence acquired henceforth should be presented in the context of the strategic and security threats posed by the use of CW weapons to the entire non-communist world.

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